

for, when I dar noon oother weyes debate,
Channe wol I styng hym with my tonge
smerte
In prechyng, so that he shal nat asterte
To been defamed falsly, if that he
hath trespassed to my bretheren or to me;
for, though I telle noght his propre name,
Men shal wel knowe that it is the same,
By signes and by othere circumstances.
Thus quyte I folk that doon us displeaunces;
Thus spitte I out my venym under hewe
Of hoolynesse, to semen hooly and trewe.
WIT, shortly, myn entente I wol devyse;
I preche of nothyng but for covetyse;
Therefore my theme is yet, & evere was,
Radix malorum est cupiditas.
Thus kan I preche agayn that same vice
Which that I use, and that is avarice.
But though myself be guilty in that synne,
Yet kan I maken oother folk to twynne
from avarice, and soore to repente.
But that is nat my principal entente;
I preche nothyng but for covetise.
Of this matere it oghte ynogh suffice.
Thanne telle I hem ensamples many oon
Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon:

for lewed peple loven tales olde;
Swiche thynges kan they wel reporte & holde.
What! trowe ye the whiles I may preche,
And wyne gold and silver for I teche,
That I wol lyve in poverté wilfully?
Nat, nay, I thoghte it nevere, trewely!
for I wol preche and begge in sondry landes;
I wol nat do no labour with myne handes,
Ne make baskettes, and lyve therby,
Bycause I wol nat beggen ydelly.
I wol noon of the Apostles countrefete;
I wol have moneie, wolles, chese and whete,
Al were it yeven of the povereste page,
Or of the povereste wydwe in a village,
Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
Nay! I wol drynke licour of the vyne,
And have a joly wenche in every toun;
But herkneth, lordynges, in conclusioun.
Youre likyng is that I shal telle a tale.
Now have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,
By God, I hope I shal yow telle a thyng
That shal, by resoun, been at youre likyng;
for though myself be a ful vicious man,
A moral tale yet I yow telle kan,
Which I am wont to preche, for to wyne.
Now hoold your pees, my tale I wol bigynne.

HEERE BIGYNNETH THE PARDONERS TALE

IN Flaundes whilom
was a compaignye
Of yonge folk, that
haunteden folye,
As riot, hasard, stewes
and tavernes,
Wheras with harpes,
lutes, and gyternes,
They daunce & pleyen
at dees, bothe day and
nyght,
And eten also and drynken over hir myght,
Churgh which they doon the devel sacrificie
Withinne that develes temple, in cursed wise,
By superfluytee abhominable;
hir othes been so grete and so dampnable,
That it is grisly for to heere hem swere;
Oure blissed Lordes body they totere;
hem thought that Jewes rente hym noght
ynough;
And ech of hem at othere synne lough.
And right anon thanne comen tombesteres
fetys and smale, and yonge frutes teres,
Syngeres with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
Whiche been the verray develes officeres,
To kyndle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
That is annexed unto glotonye.
The hooly writ take I to my witesse,
That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.
O, how that dronken Looth, un-
kyndely,
Lay by his doghtres two, un-
wityngly;

So dronke he was, he nyste what he wroughte.
Herodes, whoso wel the stories soghte,
Whan he of wyn was repleet at his feeste,
Right at his owene table, he yaf his heeste
To sleen the Baptist John, ful gylteles.
Senec seith eek a good word douteles;
He seith, he kan no difference fynde
Bitwix a man that is out of his mynde
And a man which that is dronkelewe,
But that woodnesse, yfallen in a shrewe,
Persevereth longer than dooth dronkenesse.
O glotonye, ful of cursednesse;
O cause first of oure confusioun;
O original of oure dampnacioun;
Til Crist hadde boght us with his blood agayn.
O, how deere, shortly for to sayn,
Aboght was thilke cursed vileynye;
Corrupt was al this world for glotonye.
Adam oure fader, and his wyf also,
fro Paradys to labour and to wo
were dryven for that vice, it is no drede;
for whil that Adam fasted, as I rede,
He was in Paradys; and whan that he
set of the fruyt defended, on the tree,
Anon he was out cast to wo and peyne.
O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!
WISTE a man how manye maladyes
folwen of excesse and of glotonyes.
He wolde been the moore mesurable
Of his diete, sittynge at his table.
Alas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,
Maketh that, est and west, and north & south,
In erthe, in air, in water, men to swynke

To gete a gloton deyntee mete and drynke!
Of this matiere, O Paul, wel kanstow trete;
Mete unto wombe, and wombe eek unto mete,
Shal God destroyen bothe, as Paulus seith.
Alas! a foul thyng is it, by my feith,
To seye this word, and fouler is the dede
Whan man so drynke of the white and rede,
That of his throte he maketh his pryvee,
Thurgh thilke cursed superfluytee.
The Apostel wepyng seith ful pitously,
Ther walken manye of which yow toold have I,
I seye it now, wepyng with pitous voyes,
That they been enemyes of Cristes croys,
Of which the ende is deeth, wombe is hir god.
O wombe! O bely! O styngyng cod!
Fulfilled of donge and of corrupcioun;
At either ende of thee foul is the soun;
How greet labour and cost is thee to fynde!
Thise cookes, how they stampe, and streyne, and
grynde,
And turnen substance into accident,
To fulfille al thy likerous talent.
Out of the harde bones knokke they
The mary, for they caste noght away
That may go thurgh the golet softe and swoote;
Of spicerie, of leef, and bark, and roote,
Shal been his sauce ymakid by delit,
To make hym yet a newer appetit;
But certes, he that hauntheth swiche delices
Is deed, whil that he lyveth in tho vices.

LECHE ROUS thyng is wyn, and dronk-
enesse
Is ful of stryvyng and of wretchednesse.
O dronke man! disfigured is thy face,
Sour is thy breith, foul artow to embrace,
And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun
As though thou seydest ay, Sampson, Samp-
son;
And yet, God woot, Sampson drank nevere no
wyn.
Thou fallest, as it were a styked swyn,
Thy tonge is lost and al thyn honeste cure;
for dronkenesse is verray sepulture
Of mannes wit and his discrecioun;
In whom that drynke hath dominacioun
He kan no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
Now kepe yow fro the white wyn of Lepe,
And namely fro the white wyn of Lepe,
That is to selle in fysshstrete, or in Chepe.
This wyn of Spaigne crepeth subtilly
In othere wyne, growynge faste by,
Of which ther ryseth swich fumosittee,
That whan a man hath dronken draughtes thre,
And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,
He is in Spaigne, right at the toun of Lepe,
Nat at the Rochele, ne at Burdeaux toun;
And thanne wol he seye, Sampson, Sampson.
But herkneth, lordings, o word, I yow preye,
That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,
Of victories in the Olde Testament,
Thurgh verray God, that is omnipotent,
were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
looketh the Bible, and ther ye may it leere.

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Looke, Attila, the grete conquerour,
Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishonour,
Bledynge ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
A capitayn sholde lyve in sobrenesse.
And over al this, avyseth yow right wel
What was comaunded unto Lamuel, ...
Nat Samuel, but Lamuel seye I;
Redeth the Bible, and fynde it expresly
Of wyn/veyng to hem that han justise.
Namore of this, for it may wel suffice.

AND now I have spoken of glotonye,
Now wol I yow deffenden hasardrye.
Hasard is verray mooder of lesynges,
And of deceite, and cursed forswerynges,
Blaspeme of Crist, manslaughter, and wast also
Of catel and of tyme; and forthermo,
It is repreeve and contrarie of honour
for to ben holde a commune hasardour;
And ever the hyer he is of estaat,
The moore is he holden desolaat.
If that a prynce useth hasardrye
In alle governaunce and polycie,
He is, as by commune opinoun,
Yholde the lasse in reputacioun.

Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,
Was sent to Corynthe, in ful greet honour,
fro Lacidomye, to maken hire alliaunce;
And whan he cam, hym happede, par chaunce,
That alle the gretteste that were of that lond
Pleyynge atte hasard he hem fond.
for which, as soone as it myghte be,
He stal hym hoom agayn to his contree,
And seyde, Ther wol I nat lese my name,
Ne I wol nat take on me so greet defame,
Yow for to allie unto none hasardours;
Sendeth som othere wise embassadours;
for, by my trouthe, me were levere dye,
Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye;
for ye that been so glorious in honours,
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours
As by my wyl, ne as by my tretee.

This wise philosophe thus seyde hee.
LOKE eek that, to the kyng Demetrius,
The kyng of Parthes, as the book seith us,
Sente him a paire of dees of gold, in scorn,
for he hadde used hasard therbiforn;
for which he heeld his glorie or his renoun
At no value or reputacioun.
Lordes may fynden oother maner pley
Honeste ynough to dryve the day away.

O wol I speke of othes false and grete
A word or two, as olde bookes trete.
Gret sweryng is a thyng abhominable,
And fals sweryng is yet moore repreevable.
The heighe God forbad sweryng at al,
Witesse on Mathew; but in special
Of sweryng seith the hooly Jeremye,
Thou shalt seye sooth thyn othes, and nat lye,
And swere in doom, and eek in rightwisesse;
But ydel sweryng is a cursednesse.
Bihoold and se, that in the firste table
Of heighe Goddes heestes honourable,
How that the seconde heeste of hym is this:

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